THE SOUTH END

WINTER 2026

LANGUAGE PROGRAMS CUT?

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HOW GRIT HAS CHANGED DETROIT SPORTS CULTURE

See pages 20-21

PRESIDENT ESPY'S RESIGNATION

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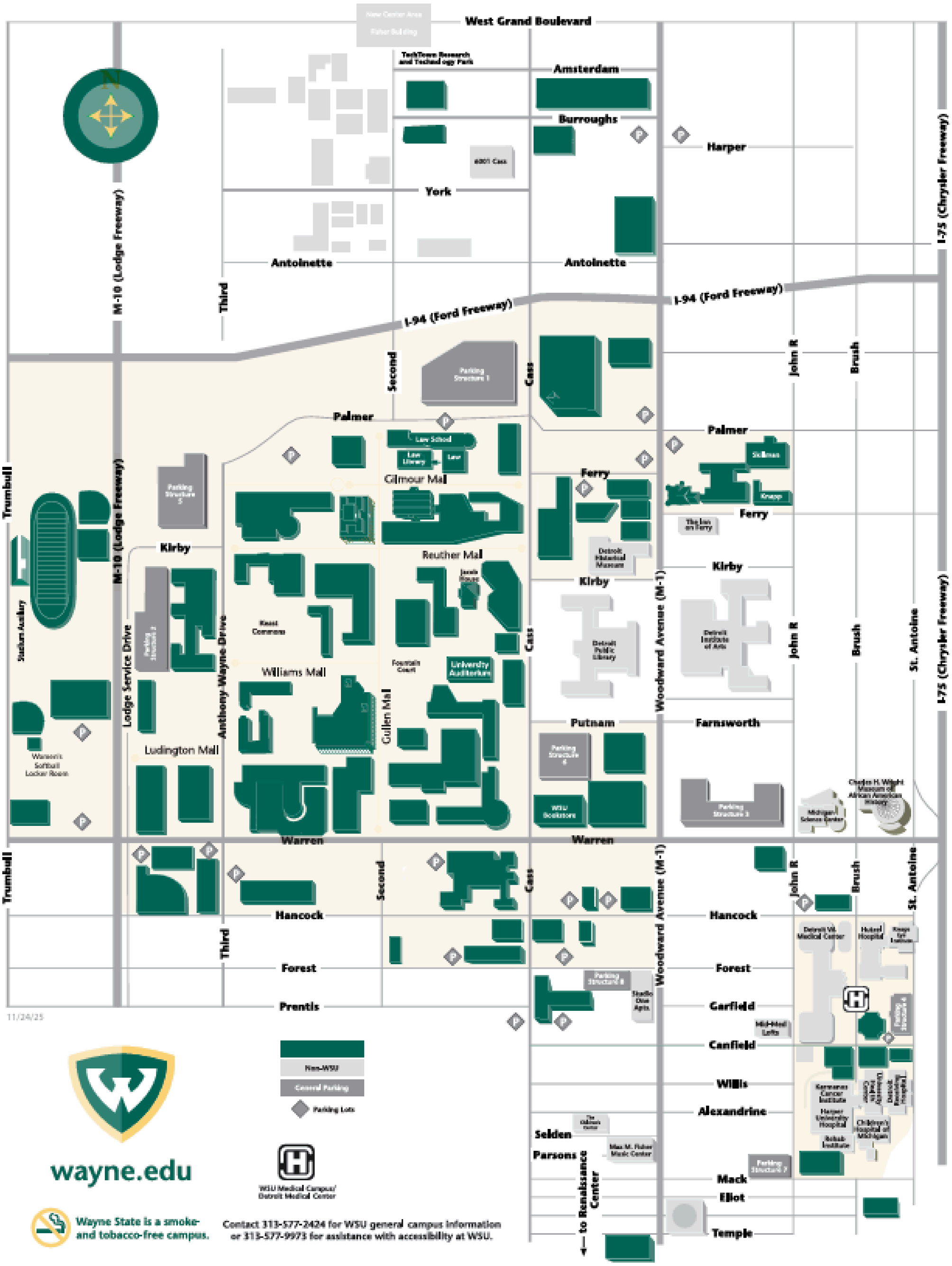
COVER PHOTO BY DEMETRICE BRANTLEY
GRAPHICS BY JULIA EZZEDDINE

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MAP



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The South End Policies

I. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The South End welcomes letters to the editors regarding all inquiries and concerns from the Wayne State community. Please limit letters to 500 words. All submissions are subject to editing and may be published.

II. CORRECTIONS

The South End welcomes letters to the editors regarding all inquiries and concerns from the Wayne State community. Please limit letters to 500 words. All submissions are subject to editing and may be published.

III. ONLINE POLICY

The South End publishes articles online and in print. Visit our website to read online articles, submit letters to the editor, advertise with us and more at thesouthend.wayne.edu. While we support the right to free speech and expression, there are guidelines for morally and socially acceptable content. Comments and feedback deemed offensive are subject to editing or removal.

IV. PUBLICATION

The South End is a daily online publication created by Wayne State students. The South End publishes special print editions at the beginning and end of the academic year. Copies of the print edition will be be available free of charge at various locations throughout campus. Business operations are handled through the Dean of Students Office. All complaints, comments, and suggestions concerning the student newspaper should be directed to thesouthend@wayne.edu.

A Letter from the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor

TSE's Editor-in-Chief, Crisstia Bowden
Photo by Demetrice Brantley

TSE's Managing Editor, Angela Martinez
Photo by Demetrice Brantley

Happy New Year, Warriors!

Another winter semester at Wayne State has begun. Serving as Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor is an honor and has not been taken lightly. We still have plenty of ground to cover and relationships to build.

Being in these roles has taught us a lot about ourselves and our campus community. Our staff is small, but mighty, showing up each day to provide coverage for our campus. Last term brought many notable events: student enrollment increased, welcoming over 24,000 students back on campus in the fall, Dr. Espy stepped down from her role as president, WSU alum Mary Sheffield became Detroit's first woman mayor and so much more.

This print edition of The South End reflects a year of reporting shaped by student voices and campus experiences. While much of our work lives online, print allows us to pause and document with lasting meaning.

The stories in this issue focus on people, events and decisions that affect Wayne State students. Our staff worked to report clearly, fairly and with care, keeping students at the center of every piece. Putting together a print edition requires collaboration across our newsroom. We thank our writers, editors, and designers for the time and effort it took to bring this paper together.

Thank you to our readers for continuing to support The South End. We hope this edition informs you, challenges you and encourages you to stay connected to the campus community.

Thank you for reading and we hope you have a wonderful semester,

Crisstia Bowden
Crisstia Bowden
Editor-in-Chief

Angela Martinez
Angela Martinez
Managing Editor

A Letter from President Bierschbach

Dear Warriors,

As we begin a new year, I feel immense pride in Wayne State University and in every student who calls our campus home. From classrooms to research labs to our community, you continue to make a positive, lasting impact. Last semester saw Warriors in action everywhere: students excelling academically, faculty producing groundbreaking scholarship and research, and our university continuing to lead the way in opportunity and innovation. Together, we cheered 2,361 graduates crossing the commencement stage. We celebrated our volleyball team's historic season. To offer you opportunities to gain real-world experience, develop in-demand skills, and earn recognition for actively preparing for your professional futures, we unveiled our Career Ready Paths — a complement to our College to Career maps — on the Get Involved platform.

Wayne State last fall also launched our Grand Challenges research initiative to accelerate the world-changing discovery and innovation taking place on our campus. Whether you're interested in health sciences, addressing new mobility challenges, improving environmental sustainability or working in the rapidly advancing field of artificial intelligence, these efforts support you and ensure campus discoveries lead to real solutions in our city, state and beyond.

Warrior Strong is a value we live together every day, and the world is taking notice.

For the second straight year, Wayne State was this fall recognized by U.S. News & World Report among the nation's Top 100 Public Universities and as the top university in Michigan for social mobility. Time magazine also named us one of the Top Colleges for Future Leaders. Enrollment at Wayne State remains strong, and last fall we reached a record year of giving in support of our students and our university's future. The days ahead are the foundations of an exciting future — for you and all of us at Wayne State.

Together, we will achieve milestone moments that write another bold chapter in Wayne State's story—and each of you has a vital role.

Wayne State University's 14th Interim President, Richard A. Bierschbach

On a personal note, I have greatly enjoyed the chances I have had to meet and spend time with so many of you over the last several months, whether over meals, at events, in discussions, or simply bumping into you out and about. Those interactions—your ideas, your journeys, your dreams, your hard work, your compassion and your commitment, dedication, and belief in Wayne State and all it stands for—inspire me and give me energy to keep moving forward in furtherance of our university's noble mission. Thank you for making Wayne State such a special community. I look forward to seeing more of you around campus!

Warrior Strong,

Richard Bierschbach

Richard A. Bierschbach,
Interim President and John W.
Reed Professor of Law

I. NEWS

Photo by Samsi Anni

Wayne State President Kimberly Espy Resigns After Controversy and Achievements

by Crisstia Bowden

Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy taking oath of office at the Presidential Oath of Office Ceremony on Aug. 22 2023. Photo by Robin Buckson, The Detroit News.

Former president Kimberly Andrews Espy, Ph.D., became the university's first female president in *August 2023*, last Wednesday she announced she will resign for personal reasons. Her time in office featured record enrollment and expanded student aid, but also protests, lawsuits, and disputes with faculty and the Board of Governors.

"Serving this institution has been an honor, and I am deeply proud of what we have accomplished together," Espy said. "With the remarkable students who inspired me every day, this decision was not a simple one, and I look forward to spending more time with my family."

Espy took office pledging to expand scholarships for Detroit students and strengthen Wayne State's role as a research institution. Her early initiatives included expanding the *Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge* and pushing for enrollment growth among Detroit high school graduates. She also launched programs such as the College to Career Initiative and *Student Success 2.0* to improve graduation rates and career readiness.

Under her leadership, Wayne State achieved record-high post-pandemic enrollment of over *24,000 students* this fall, including approximately 7,000 new students; the university also increased first-year retention rates; and earned national recognition for its research and economic development efforts, including a top prize from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities in 2024. Her presidency was also marked by controversy.

Protest crackdowns and lawsuit: Tensions escalated in May 2024 when Wayne State police forcibly removed several pro-Palestinian demonstrators from a public Board of Governors meeting. Faculty and staff condemned the use of force, saying Espy remained silent as students were pushed out of the meeting. Last May, police carried out a pre-dawn raid of a student protest encampment calling for the university to divest from companies tied to Israel. Officers arrested *12 people*, and witnesses reported excessive force, including the removal of a woman's hijab. The incident has now moved to federal court. In June, eight students, three alumni, and a parent filed a lawsuit against the university and several administrators, alleging Wayne State violated their First, Fourth, and 14th Amendment rights. The complaints said campus police used excessive force and the university retaliated against protesters with disciplinary action. The case remains pending.

Wayne State student and *Student for Justice in Palestine* member Jenna Sukkar said Espy's resignation marked years of tension over her handling of protests.

"The last two years of Espy's intentional suppression of the Palestinian student movement has finally caught up to her," Sukkar said. "Targeting students for protesting against genocide in Palestine, was a longbattle that she lost. Espy's hands are red as she resigns in shame. The only thing she will be taking with her is a lawsuit pursued by the students she betrayed, and the blood of *680,000 Palestinians on her hands.*"

Faculty disputes and Kornbluh's suspension: Espy's

administration also faced challenges in senior leadership. *In November 2023*, then-Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Mark Kornbluh was suspended without pay during an internal investigation at Wayne State.

A FOIA request by The South End revealed Kornbluh faced at least three complaints of discrimination and bias during his time at the University of Kentucky, where he previously served as dean. Complaints filed with UK's Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity alleged gender and racial bias, citing differential treatment of Black female faculty and unfair practices in promotions reviews.

Kornbluh stepped down as the UK's dean in 2020 and later retired from Wayne State after the investigation concluded without findings in *February 2024*.

The board reportedly grew frustrated with Espy's handling of leadership decisions, adding to tensions which contributed to her resignation.

Strained relationship with the board: The Detroit News *reported* the board grew particularly frustrated after Medical School Dean Wael Sakr was placed on leave in August without clear communication. Some governors also raised concerns about Espy's limited presence in Detroit civic life. While she lives in the official presidential residence, she cast her 2024 ballot in Bexar County, Texas, not Michigan.

Accomplishments Overshadowed: Even with these disputes, Espy presided over the groundbreaking of a $200 million Health Sciences Research Building and expanded aid programs for Detroit students, including the Wayne State Guarantee, which allowed nearly 60% of incoming first-year students in 2023 to attend tuition-free.

She also launched initiatives such as the College to Career program, aimed at giving students real-word learning experiences, and worked to strengthen enrollment growth and community partnerships. However, disputes with students, faculty, and the board have overshadowed many of these achievements.

What's next: The terms of Espy's departure remain unclear. Her contract, valued at nearly $1 million annually, includes a tenured faculty position in the School of Medicine, which she has since forfeited. The Board of Governors also approved a *separation agreement* paying Espy $760,449, about one year's salary, along with two years of health care coverage for her and her husband, Paul Kaufmann, Ph.D.

Espy's expected resignation follows a wave of leadership changes across Michigan universities, including recent departures at the University of Michigan and Western Michigan University; while Eastern Michigan University's president is slated to leave on June 30, 2026.

Following the announcement, Wayne State's Board of Governors named Richard Bierschbach, dean of the Law School and John W. Reed Professor of Law, as the university's new interim president. Now in his eighth year as dean and the university's longest-serving current dean, Bierschbach said he is honored to serve during this period of transition. He said growing up in a working-class household in Wyoming, Michigan, showed him the transformative power of accessible public education.

"I begin this new work with unwavering belief in our university and everything we represent," Bierschbach said in a *campus-wide email.* "During my time as interim president, my commitment is straightforward: to support and advance the mission that makes Wayne State University indispensable. Together, we will continue to be a place where talented, determined students can achieve their dreams regardless of their starting point, remain a force for positive change in Detroit and beyond, and uphold the academic excellence and integrity that define us as a leading research university."

The board voted unanimously to approve Bierschbach. He said he looks forward to working with students, faculty, and staff while the board searches for a permanent president.

Identity of Wayne State University Questioned: Faculty Discusses the Impacts of Swift Cuts to Language Programs

by Faith Ballard and Alana DeMaggio

At Wayne State's Student Senate meeting held on Oct. 2, Japanese language instructor Andrew Greig addressed the proposed elimination of the university's Japanese program. Greig said that within three years, the university's foreign language offerings could be reduced to Spanish, French, Chinese and Arabic.

Faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences said in July, several language programs—including Polish, Russian, Ancient Greek, Modern Greek and Hebrew—were canceled without faculty input. Faculty learned of the decisions through internal department communication rather than official university statements.

WSU's website lists its mission as creating and advancing knowledge, preparing a diverse student body and positively impacting local and global communities. Its stated values include collaboration, integrity, innovation, excellence, diversity and leadership. Faculty members said the language cuts conflict with those principles.

Photo by Jan Kopriva, Canva

Wayne State Language Program Cuts Timeline:

- **April 1991 – Greek & Latin**
  - Hellenic Educational Committee donates $300,000 to create a Modern Greek Studies endowment.
  - Donation built over decades by Detroit's Greek community.
  - Board of Governors unanimously approves the endowment (7–0).
- **1995 – Classics**
  - Classics faculty reduced from 8 professors to 2 over time.
  - Course offerings shrink, contributing to declining enrollments.
- **August 2007 – Multiple Languages**
  - Four language departments merged abruptly.
  - Department chairs not informed in advance; no faculty input.
- **2018 – Classical & Modern Languages**
  - Department undergoes a program review.
  - Faculty implement all required reforms, but are later told efforts were insufficient.
- **July 2025 – Multiple Languages**
  - Five language programs canceled without warning: Polish, Russian, Ancient Greek, Modern Greek, and Hebrew
  - Some affected courses taught by full-time faculty.

- Faculty not formally notified before fall meetings.

- **August 2025 — Polish**
  - Polish language program canceled three weeks before semester starts.
  - Enrollment had remained steady (~10 students).
  - Reason given: low enrollment.
  - Polish Culture course approved initially, contract sent then retracted the next day with apology.

- **Early September 2025 — Japanese**
  - Faculty was informed that the Japanese program will be **phased out**.
  - Reasons cited: Budget cuts, AI reducing need for language learning, possible changes to language requirements.

- **September 5, 2025 — Department Update**
  - Only Spanish, French, Arabic, and Chinese confirmed to remain.
  - Classics reduced to 2 professors.
  - Faculty express concern over lack of consultation and educational impact.

- **Winter 2026 Semester**
  - Program cuts take effect.
  - Polish Culture courses eliminated.
  - Programs ending: Polish, Ancient Greek, Modern Greek, Russian

- **Winter 2027 Semester — Japanese**
  - Japanese program scheduled to end.
  - Faculty contracts extend through the 2026—27 academic year.

According to university data, Wayne State enrolled more than 24,000 students this fall, an increase from fall 2024. About 1,100 students are international, representing more than 80 countries.

University data shows a decline in faculty and enrollment in the Classical and Modern Languages department. Full-time faculty dropped from 34 in fall 2019 to 27 in fall 2025. Part-time faculty declined from 57 to 39 during the same period. Undergraduate enrollment fell from 167 enrolled to 54.

Despite overall university enrollment growth, faculty expressed concern about the administration's direction.

Recently former Wayne Academic Union President Jennifer Sheridan Moss said faculty were blindsided by the July cancellations.

"This summer, again with no warning or discussion, five languages were canceled," Moss said. "Faculty weren't even notified. When we got to our first meeting in the fall, some colleagues still hadn't heard."

Leonidas Pittos, associate professor of teaching in Byzantine and Modern Greek studies, said humanities programs continue to lose tenure lines to STEM fields.

"There is a decided emphasis toward STEM," Pittos said. "This is changing the identity of our campus, and it's happening without much faculty input."

Moss said program decisions should involve departments rather than administrators.

"The dean's office isn't supposed to make programmatic decisions — departments are," she said.

Faculty questioned the financial justification for the cuts.

"Most of these languages pay for themselves," Moss said. "Canceling them doesn't make financial sense."

Anne Duggan, a professor of French, said small class sizes are pedagogically effective.

"We do a lot with a little," Duggan said. "If we lose too many languages, we're going to hurt the university and our students."

Duggan said declining language enrollment reflects national trends in higher education, but emphasized the importance of maintaining smaller programs.

"Language learning gives students cultural awareness and empathy that technology can't replicate," she said.

Faculty argued that language programs support WSU's international and diversity goals, particularly in Detroit, where many of the cut languages are spoken by local communities.

Wayne State's identity and values in question. "It's absurd to have the word 'global' in our university mission statement while we cut foreign languages," Moss said.

Pittos said WSU competes with much larger institutions in the number of languages offered.

"If we start tearing down our language offerings, we're changing our diversity profile," he said.

Japanese language program perspective: Rie Masuda, who has taught Japanese at Wayne State for 31 years, said communication about the program's future has been limited.

"The Japanese program is like my child," Masuda said. *"Our students built a real community... For them it's more than language – it's connection, discipline and identity. That's what education should be."*

Greig said administrators cited budget cuts, artificial intelligence and potential changes to language requirements.

"I'm paid the bare minimum, under $22,000 a year and we teach nearly full classes," Greig said. "It's hard to see where the money's going."

Wayne without Greek: Pittos said reducing Modern Greek offerings raises concerns about compliance with WSU's Board of Governors 1991 endowment requiring Modern Greek courses.

"Directed studies are independent studies: they're kind of one-on-one. We're technically still teaching Modern Greek on campus, except in this independent study format, which is not obviously what we had in mind," he said.

Polish language perspective: Aneta Walag-Luzinski, who began teaching Polish in 2023, said enrollment had remained steady before the program was canceled.

"The numbers were the same as always," she said. "About 10 students."

"Wayne State was the only university here [in metro Detroit] offering Polish," Walag-Luzinski said. "Ending this program means losing a vital connection to our community's [the Detroit community] heritage."

Ripples of impact, a way forward identified: Faculty morale has declined, Pittos said, with some retiring early or seeking other employment.

"This is not us [faculty] versus them [WSU administration]," Pittos said. "Faculty governance is essential to finding a solution that actually works."

In a statement provided to The South End on Nov. 3, CLAS Dean Stephanie Hartwell said:

"Reflecting a national trend, language course enrollment has declined in recent years at Wayne State. While there is no immediate impact to these programs for the winter 2026 semester, the Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures has been asked by its college to put forward a recommendation to address low-enrollment language areas. Any program decisions will be made in consultation with shared governance partners, including the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty council. The college will continue to work with the department to develop a sustainable plan for language education at Wayne State."

Faculty said they hope increased transparency and collaboration will preserve language education and WSU's global identity.

EVERY WARRIOR HAS THE RIGHT TO LIVE AND LEARN
AT WSU – FREE FROM HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION
TITLE IX
Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education. Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking are forms of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX and by University policy.
To learn more about WSU's Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures, please visit the Title IX website.
REPORTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
Students may report sexual misconduct to law enforcement, to the university, to both, or to neither. To report to the university, please use the reporting form found on the Title IX website.
REPORTING EMERGENCIES
In cases of threats, imminent danger and other emergencies, contact the Wayne State Police at 313-577-2222.
CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT
Counseling and Psychological Services
313-577-3398
Warrior Mental Health Urgent Services
313-577-2277
Office of Sexual Violence Prevention and Education
313-577-9220
WAYNE STATE Title IX
To learn more about support resources and reporting options, connect with the Title IX office.
313-577-9999
TITLEIX@WAYNE.EDU
TITLEIX.WAYNE.EDU

II. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Photo by Demetrice Brantley

Crafting the Stage: Wayne State's Theatre Semester of Diverse Storytelling

by Shayley Temnyk

Photo by Chuk Nowak, Wayne State University

The Wayne State Department of Theatre and Dance has been hard at work this semester with their productions of *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Little Murders*, *Seven Guitars*, and *Violet*. The season spans a remarkable range of genres, from slapstick humor to historical realism, reflecting the department's commitment to artistic variety and education. What appears on stage each semester is the result of months of careful planning and a deep understanding of what serves WSU students and audiences best.

Department chair Michael J. Barnes said curating a season in an academic setting is a delicate balance. While professional companies focus largely on ticket sales and have broad casting options, a university must think differently.

"Season selection for a university is so hard," Barnes said. "We have a committee and we bring in possible plays, but we really start with a formula...we'll usually have two musicals, we want to make certain that we have a representation) of the African American diaspora, we do a Shakespeare every third year usually, and we try to do an American classic."

"We usually start our season with a comedy," he adds, noting that audience laughter early in the academic year helps drive subscriptions and sustain the department financially. Despite these practical concerns, WSU's theatre mission is deeply tied to representation and community relevance."

Barnes, now in his 20th year, said there has been a significant shift from the department's early structure. "When I came here, we had very separate productions — undergraduate shows and graduate shows. And the graduate company was a classical theatre company doing Shakespeare, Molière, all of these old dead white men," he said.

Today, the department intentionally elevates contemporary playwrights, women playwrights, and works connected to Detroit's cultural history. "We don't need to do all dead white men," Barnes said. "It's important for us to do things that can reach out and be a part of the Detroit community."

That community connection shows in Seven Guitars, part of August Wilson's renowned twentieth-century cycle.

Barnes said Wilson is "one of the most important and certainly prolific African American playwrights in American theatre history." Wilson's language is rhythmically rich, and his ten-play cycle — each set in a different decade — forms a sweeping portrait of African American life. For WSU students, engaging with Wilson's work demands both rigorous research and strong emotional grounding.

Taylor Johnson-King, who plays Vera in Seven Guitars, describes the role as a complete immersion. One of the biggest challenges, she said, was separating herself from the present day. “We’re in 1948, and there are so many differences,” she said.

To inhabit Vera authentically, Johnson-King dove into historical research and spent time people-watching at the Aretha Franklin Jazz Café to observe older Detroiters’ mannerisms. “Even though I don’t fully agree with the things she says or does, as Taylor, I have to justify that when I’m acting as Vera,” she said. The transformation extended all the way to controlling facial expressions: “I act a lot with my face, but this was difficult because I can’t make my modern-day expressions,” she said.

For Joey Taylor, performing in both Seven Guitars and The Play That Goes Wrong created a unique challenge. Switching between Dennis, a loveable goofball in a chaotic farce, and Hedley, a 59-year-old prophet figure, required total recalibration.

“There are some nights where I’m like, I think I’m still wearing Dennis a little bit,” he said. But the contrast demonstrates the breadth of roles WSU students are trained to handle.

The Play That Goes Wrong, with its famously disastrous onstage mishaps, pushes actors towards a distinct kind of technical discipline. The comedy works only if the chaos is performed with sophistication and precision.

For Sunny Ryan, whose character must appear to be a bad actor, the work lies in creating layers of purposeful imperfection. “You play up the bit that it is bad acting...but the character believes that it’s good,” he said. “With an audience, if they react to something, I can ham it up even more. But there’s also the line of, ‘Am I milking this too much?’”

Chase Bowman, who plays the role of Jonathon, highlights the physical and emotional safety required to make slapstick funny. “Our director Jeff’s go-to phrase for us is ‘Ease is everything,’” he said.

If the actors look genuinely hurt, the comedy collapses. The show’s tightly choreographed nature limits improvisation, meaning precision is essential not only for humor but also for safety.

“We have to be as specific as possible when it comes to lines and actions because our fight choreography and cues are really specific,” Bowman said.

Actress Gina Karkoski said she agrees that the challenge lies in finding spontaneity within the constraints. “Because you know what not to do so well it can almost look too choreographed,” she said.

The task is to keep the show fresh without drifting from its meticulous structure. Karkoski’s character, a well-meaning but misguided performer, requires her to intentionally act opposite of her training. “Because we know how to act good, you just take what you learn in school and do the exact opposite,” she said.

Behind the scenes, the work continues with equal intensity. Harmoni Thompson, the stage manager, acts as the production’s central communication hub, tracking everything from blocking to show length to artistic consistency. “My job is maintaining the artistic vision of the show,” she said. Whether noting unexpected cast choices, addressing technical issues with designers, or documenting the micro-movements of a scene, she ensures the performances remain stable and repeatable.

The department is committed to providing at least 40 to 50 acting opportunities per semester.

“A lot of contemporary theatre is 2 to 5 people,” Barnes said. “We want to give more opportunities for students, so it’s harder for us to do new plays.”

Shows like Spongebob the Musical or Paradise Lost (productions to come out this semester), are chosen with cast size flexibility in mind, ensuring that students continue to learn by doing.

What emerges from lastthis semester’s productions is a department committed to balancing artistry, education, representation, and community engagement. And as the season continues, the department’s thoughtful planning and diverse storytelling provide audiences with not only entertainment, but a vivid look into the craft of theatre itself.

III. FEATURES

Photo by Demetrice Brantley

Finding Community at Wayne State

by Jana Slade

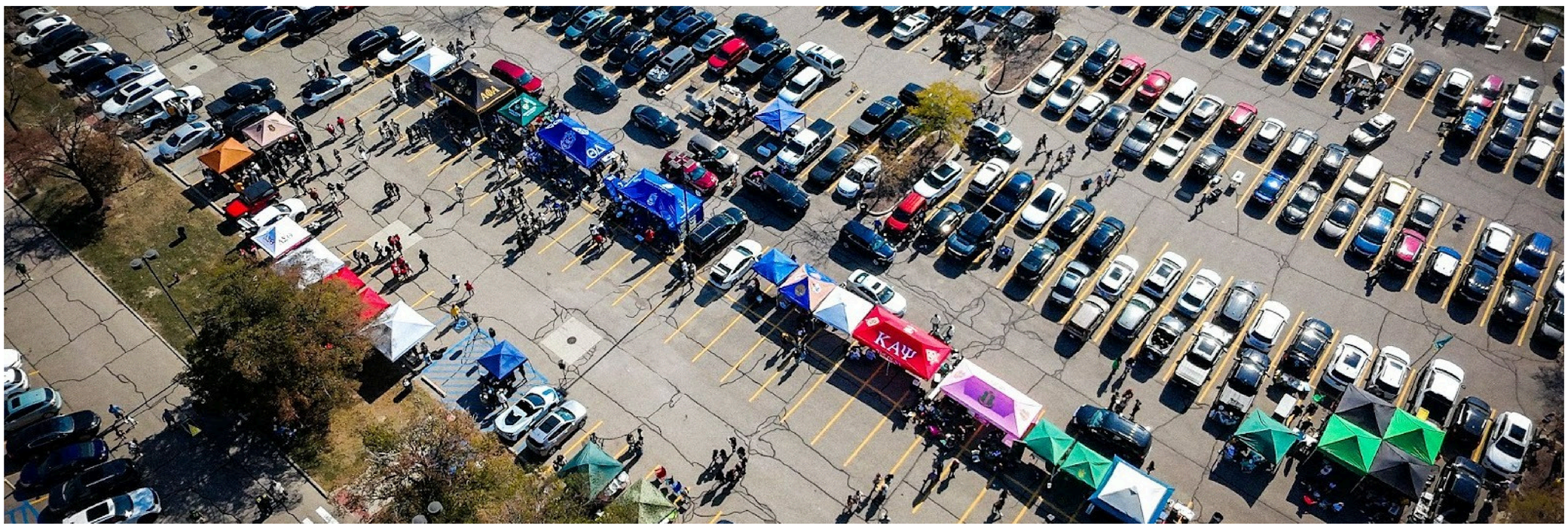

Photo by Demetrice Brantley, Wayne State University

Wayne State University is home to hundreds of student organizations and campus events, but some students say building a sense of community can still be difficult, especially at a school where most students commute.

WSU men's club soccer player David Kmetovski said he has met 30 to 40 people on campus from being on the men's club soccer team and attending classes. Most of the people he met are from playing soccer.

"I don't think there is community at Wayne State," Kmetovski said.

Kmetogski is a senior majoring in global supply chain management and commutes to campus for classes.

"I feel like the main problem is commuting because when people get there at 9 a.m. and leave at 2 p.m., you can't really have a community. There is no structure for them to build community," he said.

According to *WSU's Economic Development website*, about 85% of students commute to Wayne State.

"If everyone is driving in and leaving, the community is there for 2 hours and then gone," he said.

"I feel like people see the university as 'drive in, drive out'. It's not like MSU or U of M where there's this sense of pride," he said.

"I feel like there could be a lot done with the campus, especially that whole vacant area, they could have put basketball courts and do more with the campus to actually make people want to be there," Kmetovski said.

Last August, *Today@Wayne* announced the start of construction work on Keast Commons to create outside seating, walking paths and updated lighting in the patchy area that was once empty. Construction is expected to be complete this spring.

Wayne State freshman Brandon Flint said he met about 10 to 12 people from playing basketball at the Mort Harris Recreation and Fitness Center and through classes.

"I feel they (WSU) do a pretty good job (with community). T, they have many organizations that bring people together, they teach people about different things and different cultures. I feel like they are very inclusive," Flint said.

Flint lives on campus and does not plan on joining any organizations.

"I don't think it's on Wayne State (to help with community). I think it's more on students to connect with others, Wayne State can only do so much. You have to want to reach out to other people for you to really get involved in the community," Flint said.

Madison Dickerson, a junior majoring in public relations with a minor in journalism, lives in Towers Residential Suites.

“I could have been a commuter but I like the freedom of having my own space and having everything around me so I don't have to drive everywhere all the time,” Dickerson said.

Dickerson is an event coordinator for *Golden*, a student organization focused on women networking, and a Warrior 360 success partner.

“I became a success partner to give back to freshmen and mentor them. The reason why I joined Golden was because it’s an all black women organization and I wanted to network with like-minded women around me, so I felt like it was a good opportunity,” she said.

Dickerson said she has met people by being involved in organizations and being on campus.

“Sitting on campus, maybe at the library if I’m chilling or if my friends introduce me to people, talking to people in class sometimes is how I meet people for that most part,” she said.

Dickerson has been a member of Golden since her sophomore year and with Warrior 360 since her freshman year at WSU.

According to *Today@Wayne*, the top study spots on campus (in order) are the Student Center, David Adamany Undergraduate Library, Purdy/Kresge Library, STEM Innovation Learning Center, M. Roy Wilson State Hall, Old Main, Manoogian Hall, Faculty Administration Building, WSU Bookstore and seating areas outside of classrooms.

“I feel like the community can be a little bit better. Wayne is a commuter school so I feel like it is not as tight in community. I feel like it would be better if there was more engagement, more events that are advertised more. WSU has events but I don't think it's properly advertised. So, I think more advertising with different opportunities and events will get more engagement or more people wanting to be close to campus or staying on campus”, Dickerson said.

According to ***Get Involved,*** WSU’s online event calendar, there are over 200 events planned for the 2026 Winter semester. Not everyone has Instagram (to see event advertisements),” Dickerson said.

For student organizations to be eligible for event funding, some of the requirements include the events be free for students, open to the WSU community, to be held on campus and registered on Get Involved.

“We need more people willing to participate in events. Some people are introverted, I get that, but I feel like college is for networking when you have the time. If we get more engagement from the student body that’s willing to look for events, willing to go to networking events or willing to support the campus life, I think that would build a little more community.”

GET INVOLVED
FIND ORGANIZATIONS
Wayne State boasts over 450 student organizations on campus ranging from social to academic and everything in between.
ATTEND EVENTS
Search, RSVP and check into events happening on campus. Wayne State is bursting with fun activities, sporting events and learning experiences to attend.
TRACK INVOLVEMENT
Record your activities and memberships on campus to showcase your involvement. Discover your Involvement Record in your account menu.
WARRIOR REWARDS
Earn sweet, exclusive Wayne State swag by becoming the ultimate Warrior by participating in the Warrior Rewards path! Complete tasks and attend events to earn points.
GO.WAYNE.EDU/WARRIOR-REWARDS
GETINVOLVED.WAYNE.EDU

IV. SPORTS

Photo by Demetrice Brantley

How “Grit” Changed Detroit Sports Culture and Encapsulated a City’s Historic Turnaround

by Jeremiah Green

Photo by Daniel Mears, The Detroit News

In the last few years, Detroit has seen a complete turnaround not just on the field, hardwood, or ice, but in national media with the city's revitalized sports and entertainment mega power.

Detroit Lions Head Coach Dan Campbell said in his introductory press conference back in 2021 he wanted the football team to embody the city.

“I’ll guarantee you this: these guys are going to fight,” Campbell said. “And they’re going to scratch and claw, and they’re going to be something this city’s proud of because they’re going to take on the identity of this city.”

Campbell would later simplify his speech on HBO’s NFL Hard Knocks into one word: Grit. “Grit” has become the calling of not just the Detroit Lions but as a calling card for the return of the Motor City.

Adam Mayberry, senior at Wayne State University and Detroit native, said the sports culture in the city is nice “Even when we were losing, we still had fans,” said Mayberry. “Now that we are winning, like the Lions, the violence has been down and if we lose, people will get angry.”

An interesting observation came out when Fox 2 Detroit released that homicide rates have dropped in the city since 2021. The last time crime rates in the city were this low was back in 1962 to 1963, which was also a huge successful period for the Lions.

This rate has remained constant to this day. However, these findings led some Lions fans to speculate the Lions’ success led to lower crime rates. While having no real correlation, it helped strengthen the bond of the sports culture in the city.

Mayberry said “grit” perfectly fits the culture of Detroit and its upcoming destination for events and sports.

“It just sums up everything we’ve all been through,” Mayberry said. “Everyone says they don’t want to come to

Photo by Nic Antaya, Getty Images

Detroit and that's fine. They sent Jared Goff to die and he came out leading the Lions' den for us."

Mayberry said the community is coming back together because of sports and it feels like we are back again.

While the Lions made the "grit" slogan popular, they are not the only team to adopt the grit moniker.

During the improbable run in the 2024 postseason, the Detroit Tigers adopted the nickname "Gritty Tigs". This was after they made the postseason despite having 0.2% chance of making it back on Aug. 11, 2024.

The Detroit Pistons had a historic turnaround after tripling their win total to make the NBA Playoffs in 2024. Their slogan for that playoff series against the New York Knicks was "Back to Work", which was a callback to the 2004 "Going to Work" Pistons, known for their toughness and gritty players.

The Detroit Red Wings are on pace this 2025-2026 season to have their most wins, goals, and point totals since they last made the playoffs in the 2015-2016 season.

Akili Rush, WSU freshman, said it has been inspiring to finally see the sports and the city become so great over the years.

"I'm excited to finally see the city and teams on the up," Rush said. " We're watching it get better each year and so are the teams as a whole.

Rush said he feels that stigmation targeted at the city has changed and that sports may play a factor but does not entirely drive the narrative.

"I think it is just how they look at the city and realize it's not so bad," Rush said. "Everything is getting better."

Rush said events like the NFL Draft in 2024 allows sports fans and common travelers to come and see the changes in the city first hand.

"People from the outside are coming here and not judging on what's been promoted online, and (instead) seeing that it is cool to be here," Rush said.

Sports aren't the only thing that has turned the city around, the overall outlook of the city has changed. Whether it was through the renovation of Michigan Central Station or the overall renovations downtown, the city has been making a comeback for the last decade.

Photo by Dave Reginek/NHLI, Getty Images

Ian Knox, WSU freshman, said he believes the city is now going to see major upgrades because of major events like the NFL Draft.

“We see how people were at the Draft, we are going to see major changes to the city, " Knox said. “We are already seeing the changes they are making downtown and it can be traced back to the Lions and the city being backed up.”

According to the City Of Detroit, “Detroit gained 1,852 residents between July 1, 2022 and July 1, 2023, marking the first time since 1957 Detroit has not lost population in the eyes of the Census Bureau.”

Beyond the city’s major teams, other Detroit franchises are also contributing to the excitement. Detroit City FC continues to draw support from fans at Keyworth Stadium, and will move to AlumniField in 2027. The Pistons G League team, Motor City Cruise has brought energy to the Wayne State Fieldhouse, and fans can also enjoy events like the annual **Detroit Grand Prix showcasing**

Photo by Brian Sevald/NBAE, Getty Images

IndyCar racing. Looking ahead, the WNBA will return to Detroit in 2029, adding another chapter to the city’s culture.

People are now coming and staying in the city of Detroit. While sports may not be the full motive for the turnaround in the city, the impact sports have on devoted fans, and the city they reside in cannot be understated.

THE
FOOD
PANTRY
& THRIFT SHOP
The W Food Pantry & Thrift Shop provides currently enrolled Wayne State Warriors in need of food assistance with supplemental food and additional resources gently used garments to enhance student success.
Food Pantry
Access to food twice a month
Feminine hygiene items available any time
Essential baby items
Thrift Shop
Casual and career clothing items available
Household items available
Other resources
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services representative on campus to learn and apply for state and federal benefits (SNAP, childcare, transportation, etc.)
Warrior Meal Share Program
THEW.WAYNE.EDU

MEN'S BASKETBALL

2025-2026 SCHEDULE

NOV 14 vs UM-DEARBORN
NOV 16 vs ASHLAND
NOV 22 vs NORTHWOOD
NOV 25 vs FINDLAY
DEC 02 vs PURDUE NORTHWEST
DEC 06 vs FERRIS STATE
DEC 10 vs TIFFIN
DEC 13 vs LEWIS
DEC 20 vs REDEEMER
JAN 02 vs SAGINAW VALLEY STATE
JAN 04 vs LAKE SUPERIOR STATE
JAN 08 vs GRAND VALLEY STATE
JAN 10 vs DAVENPORT
JAN 15 vs PARKSIDE
JAN 17 vs ROOSEVELT
JAN 22 vs MICHIGAN TECH
JAN 24 vs NORTHERN MICHIGAN
JAN 29 vs PURDUE NORTHWEST
JAN 31 vs FERRIS STATE
FEB 05 vs DAVENPORT
FEB 07 vs GRAND VALLEY STATE
FEB 12 vs NORTHERN MICHIGAN
FEB 14 vs MICHIGAN TECH
FEB 19 vs ROOSEVELT
FEB 21 vs PARKSIDE
FEB 26 vs LAKE SUPERIOR STATE
FEB 28 vs SAGINAW VALLEY STATE

"I THINK THAT IS WHAT'S EXCITING: TO SEE WHO IS GOING TO STEP INTO THESE ROLES."

-COACH BRYAN SMOTHERS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

2025-2026 SCHEDULE

NOV 07 vs TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
NOV 08 vs ALABAMA-HUNTSVILLE
NOV 14 vs MALONE
NOV 15 vs ASHLAND
NOV 19 vs HILLSDALE
NOV 26 vs NORTHWOOD
DEC 02 vs PURDUE NORTHWEST
DEC 06 vs FERRIS STATE
DEC 09 vs TIFFIN
DEC 17 vs TOLEDO
DEC 20 vs FINDLAY
JAN 02 vs SAGINAW VALLEY STATE
JAN 04 vs LAKE SUPERIOR STATE
JAN 08 vs GRAND VALLEY STATE
JAN 10 vs DAVENPORT
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FEB 28 vs SAGINAW VALLEY STATE

"IF WE REALLY COME TOGETHER, IT CAN BE AN IMPORTANT SPRINGBOARD FOR OUR SUCCESS."

-COACH CARRIE LOHR

= HOME =AWAY

SOURCE: SHEYENNE RAMSEY

THE SOUTH END
WINTER 2026 STAFF

PHOTOS BY DEMETRICE BRANTLEY

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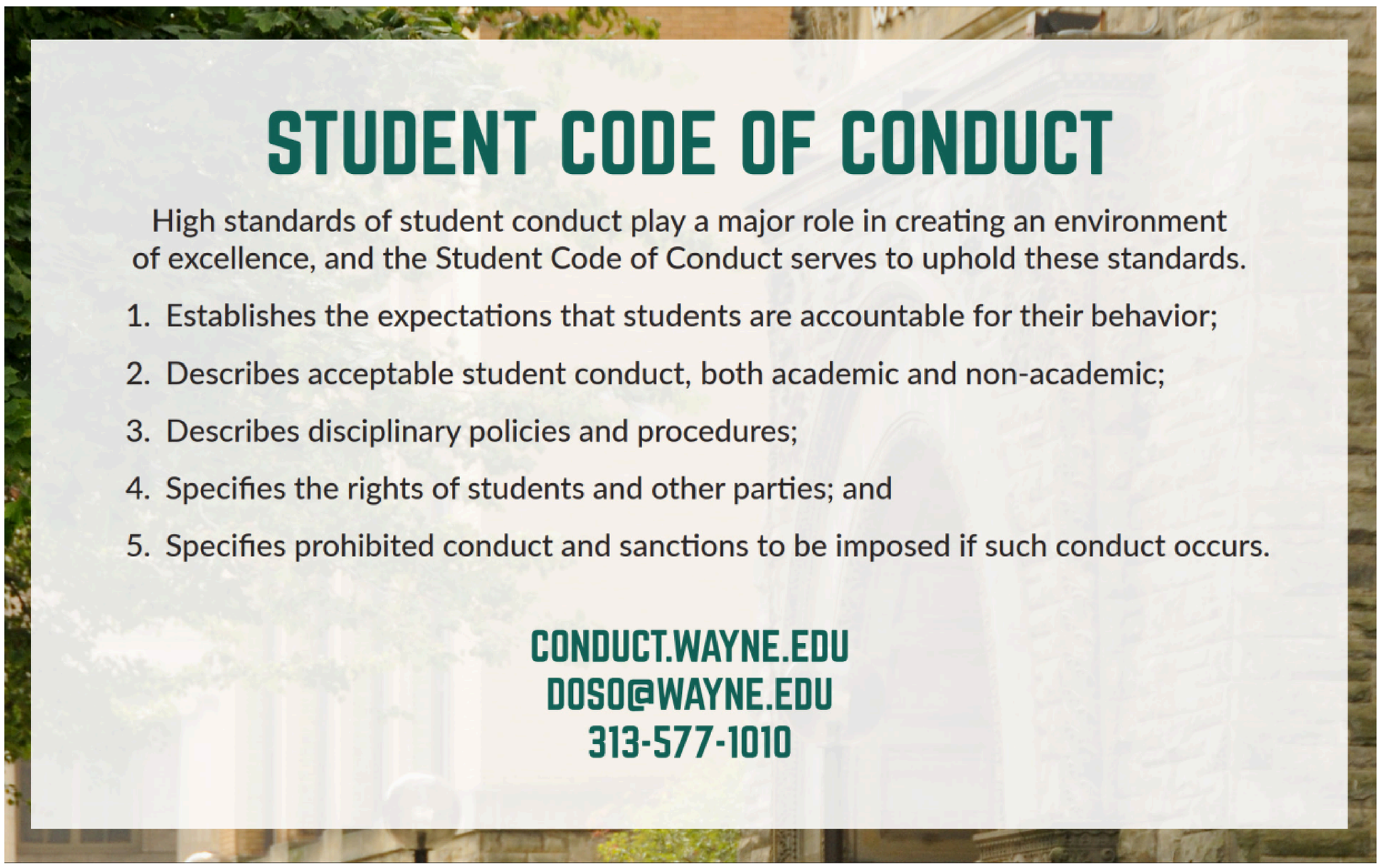
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High standards of student conduct play a major role in creating an environment of excellence, and the Student Code of Conduct serves to uphold these standards.
1. Establishes the expectations that students are accountable for their behavior;
2. Describes acceptable student conduct, both academic and non-academic;
3. Describes disciplinary policies and procedures;
4. Specifies the rights of students and other parties; and
5. Specifies prohibited conduct and sanctions to be imposed if such conduct occurs.
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